

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 03628 241426Z

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ACTION OPR-02

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R 241200Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7656

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WASHDC

COE MEDDIV LIVORNO

COE RIYADH

USMTM DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ALWO, SA

SUBJ: TABUK POST DIFFERENTIAL

REF : (A) A-2074, MARCH 13, 1974

(B) JIDDA OM OF MAY 19, 1974

(C) A-4426, MAY 31, 1974

SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES REDUCTION IN TABUK POST DIFFERENTIAL TOTALLY UNFOUNDED AND REQUESTS COPY OF LATEST DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN REACHING DECISIONS TO LOWER DIFFERENTIAL. EMBASSY REQUESTS 25 PERCENT DIFFERENTIAL BE RESTORED IMMEDIATELY PENDING SUBMISSION OF NEW TABUK POST DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE. END SUMMARY.

1. REF B REPORTED EMBASSY'S VIEW THAT REDUCTION OF TABUK POST DIFFERENTIAL FROM 25 TO 20 PERCENT MUST BE CLERICAL ERROR, AND REQUESTED COPY OF DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE UPON WHICH DEPARTMENT BASED DECISION TO LOWER DIFFERENTIAL TO 20 PERCENT. SUBSEQUENT REDUCTION TO 15 PERCENT (REF C) ELIMINATES CLERICAL ERROR THESIS AND LEADS EMBASSY TO CONCLUDE THAT FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON DIFFERENTIALS ARE BEING LOWERED WITHOUT ANY CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO ACTUAL CONDITIONS AT LOCATION.

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PAGE 02 JIDDA 03628 241426Z

LATEST REDUCTION TO 15 PERCENT DIFFERENTIAL FOR TABUK MIGHT

BE IGNORED WERE IT NOT FOR FACT THAT US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS IS ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE A CRASH, TWELVE-MONTH MEDICAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AT TABUK FOR SAG, A PROGRAM WHICH WILL NECESSITATE ASSIGNING PERHAPS 30 CIVILIAN DOD EMPLOYEES TO TABUK. TABUK MUST BE AMONG MOST AUSTERE POSTS IN THE WORLD AT WHICH USG EMPLOYEES ARE ASKED TO SERVE AND WE FORESEE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN CONVINCING WOULD-BE EMPLOYEES TO TAKE ASSIGNMENT FOR MERE 15 PERCENT DIFFERENTIAL. FAILURE TO MOBILIZE STAFF WITHIN NEXT 60 TO 90 DAYS MAY DELAY PROJECT AND RESULT IN MAJOR EMBARRASSMENT TO USG.

2. WHILE RENEWING OUR REQUEST FOR COPY OF DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE USED TO JUSTIFY SUCCESSIVE REDUCTIONS IN TABUK DIFFERENTIAL, EMBASSY ALSO REQUESTS IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF DIFFERENTIAL TO 25 PERCENT, PENDING COMPLETION OF NEW SURVEY AND SUBMISSION OF CURRENT DIFFERENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE. REDUCTION OF TABUK DIFFERENTIAL BELOW 25 PERCENT ABSOLUTELY CANNOT BE DEFENDED ON ANY GROUNDS WHATSOEVER. PENDING SUBMISSION OF NEW QUESTIONNAIRE, EMBASSY SUMMARIZES MOST SALIENT POINTS OF TABUK ENVIRONMENT AS FOLLOWS:

A. MEDICAL: UNTIL OPENING OF SAUDI ARMY HOSPITAL IN 12-15 MONTHS, MEDICAL SERVICES ARE LIMITED TO ONE MALE NURSE EMPLOYED BY LOCAL BENDIX-SIYANCO FIRM AND ONE NURSE EMPLOYED BY GERMAN CONSTRUCTION FIRM. SERIOUS CASES REQUIRE EVACUATION TO JIDDA OR BEIRUT BY CHARTER AIRCRAFT. WATER MUST BE BOILED. NO MUNICIPAL SEWAGE SYSTEM.

B. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: NO SCHOOL FOR WESTERNERS.

C. ENTERTAINMENT: NO RESTAURANTS PATRONIZABLE BY AMERICANS; NO THEATERS; NO TV; MEDIUM-WAVE RADIO LIMITED TO RADIO CAIRO AND RADIO ISRAEL.

D. ISOLATION: AREA COMMANDER RESTRICTS PERSONNEL TO 20 KILOMETER RADIUS FROM TABUK. ONE REGULARLY SCHEDULED FLIGHT A WEEK TO AMMAN, ONE TO DAMASCUS, ONE TO BEIRUT. FIVE PER WEEK TO JIDDA. CLOSEST RECREATION AREA TO WHICH ONE MAY DRIVE IS AQABA, JORDAN, WHICH REQUIRES VISAS, BORDER FORMALITIES, CAR INSURANCE, ETC.

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PAGE 03 JIDDA 03628 241426Z

E. WESTERN COMMUNITY: ABOUT ONE HUNDRED GERMANS, DECLINING TO 40 WITHIN NEXT 60 DAYS; 100 FRENCH, MOSTLY UNACCOMPANIED MALES, WHO DO NOT MIX OUTSIDE THEIR OWN COMMUNITY; ABOUT 50 ADDITIONAL PEOPLE IN CONSTRUCTION FIRMS.

F. FOODSTUFFS: TWO FOOD FREEZERS IN TOWN; SUPPLIES LIMITED, ERRATIC, AND OF QUESTIONABLE SAFETY. PORK AND ALCOHOL PROHIBITED. BEEF RARELY OBTAINABLE.

G. WOMEN PROHIBITED FROM DRIVING.

H. MISCELLANEOUS: PHONES ALMOST UNOBTAINABLE BY PRIVATE
INDIVIDUALS; NO LONG-DISTANCE PHONE SERVICE; MAIL DELIVERIES
SPORADIC; DUST STORMS AND TEMPERATURE EXTREMES.

3. SINCE ISSUE IS OF VITAL CONCERN TO CORPS OF ENGINEER RE-
CRUITMENT EFFORT, REQUEST REPLY AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT.
AKINS

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